

# THE COMET.

BY WALTER WILDFIRE.

HIS COURSE HE BENDS  
THRO' THE CALM FIRMAMENT; BUT WHETHER UP OR DOWN,  
BY CENTRICK OR ECCENTRICK, HARD TO TELL. MILTON.

---

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1811.

---

FOR THE COMET.

## JEPHTHAH'S VOW.

### I.

The battle had ceas'd—and the victory was won :  
The wild cry of horror was o'er.  
Now arose in his glory the bright beaming sun,  
And with him, the war chief his journey begun,  
With a soul breathing vengeance no more.

### II.

The foes of his country lay strew'd on the plain.  
A tear stole its course to his eye ;  
But the chieftain disdain'd every semblance of pain,  
He thought of his child—of his country again,  
And suppress'd, while 'twas forming, a sigh.

### III.

“ Oh Father of light,” said the conquering chief,  
“ The vow which I made I renew,  
“ 'Twas thy powerful arm gave the welcome relief,  
“ When I call'd on thy name in the fullness of grief,  
“ And my hopes were but cheerless and few.

### IV.

“ An offering of love will I pay to thy name ;  
“ An offering thou wilt not despise :  
“ The first being I meet when I welcome again  
“ The land of my fathers, I left not in vain,  
“ With the flames on thy altars shall rise.

### V.

Now hush'd were his words—through the far spreading bands  
Nought was heard but the foot fall around,

Till his lips in wild joy, press his own native lands,  
And to Heaven are lifted his trembling hands,  
While the silence is still and profound.

## VI.

Oh, listen ! at distance what wild musick sounds,  
And at distance what maiden appears :  
See ! forward she comes with a light springing bound,  
And casts her wild eyes in extacy round,  
For a parent is seen through her tears.

## VII.

Her harp's wildest strain gave a thrill of delight :  
A moment she springs to his arms.  
"My daughter ! O God !" not the terrors of fight,  
When legions on legions against him unite,  
Could bring to his soul such alarms.

## VIII.

In wild horrors he starts as a fiend had appear'd.  
His eyes in mute agony close—  
His sword o'er his age frosted forehead is rear'd,  
Which, with scars from his many fought battles is scar'd,  
Nor his country—nor daughter he knows.

## IX.

But sudden conviction in quick flashes told,  
That daughter was destin'd to die.  
Oh no longer could nature the wild struggle hold,  
His grief issued forth, unconstrain'd, uncontroll'd,  
And the tears dimm'd his time wither'd eye.

## X.

His daughter was kneeling and clasping that form  
She ne'er touch'd but with transport before.  
His daughter was watching the furious storm  
That with quick-flashing lightning so madly deform'd  
A face beaming sunshine no more.

## XI.

But how did that daughter so gentle and fair,  
Hear the sentence that doom'd her to die !  
For a moment was heard the wild cry of despair ;  
For a moment her eye gave a heart-moving glare,  
For a moment her bosom heav'd high.

## XII.

It was but a moment—the phrenzy was past :  
She smilingly rush'd to his arms,

And there as a flower when chill'd by the blast.  
Reclines on an oak while its fury may last,  
On his bosom she hush'd her alarms.

## XIII.

Not an eye saw the scene but moistened in woe :  
Not a voice could a sentence command :  
Down the soldier's rough cheeks, tears of agony flow,  
While the sobs of the maidens heav'd mournful and slow,  
Sad pity wept over the band.

## XIV.

But fled was the hope in the fair maiden's breast :  
From her father's fond bosom she rose.  
Mild virtue appear'd in her manner confess'd,  
She look'd like a saint from the realms of the blest,  
Not a mortal, encircled with woes.

## XV.

She turn'd from the group—and can I declare,  
The hope and the fortitude given,  
As she sunk on her knee, with the soul breathing prayer  
That her father might flourish, of virtue the care,  
'Till with glory he blossom'd in heaven.

## XVI.

“ O comfort him, Heaven, when low in the dust  
“ My limbs are inactively laid !  
“ O comfort him, Heaven ; and let him then trust,  
“ That free and immortal the souls of the just  
“ Are in glory and beauty arrayed.

## XVII.

The maiden arose—O I cannot portray  
The devotion that glow'd in her eye.  
Religion's sweet self in its light seem'd to stray,  
With the mildness of night—with the glory of day,  
But 'twas pity that prompted her sigh.

## XVIII.

“ My Father”—the chief rais'd his agoniz'd head  
With a look of the deepest despair !  
“ My Father”—the words she would utter had fled,  
But the sigh which she heav'd and the tears which she shed  
Told more than her words would declare.

## XIX.

The weakness was past—and the maiden could say  
 “ My Father, for thee I can die !  
 The bands slowly moved on their sorrowful way,  
 But never again, from that heart-breaking day,  
 Was a smile known to force its enlivening ray,  
 From the old chieftain’s grief speaking eye.

## GEORGE PSALMANAZAR.

The following sketch of a man of learning, a literary impostor, and one of the writers employed in compiling the Universal History, from an English work of celebrity, will no doubt be interesting to those of our readers, who have

“ by parcels something heard,  
 But nought attentively,”  
 of the singular being who is the subject of it.

“ This adventurer, who attracted in his time, no small attention, was first noticed by a Colonel Lander, in the garrison of Sluys, at at which place, a wanderer from his parents and country, and under the pressure of extreme poverty, he had enlisted as a private soldier. But he industriously and artfully circulated a strange story, that he was a native of the island of Formosa, converted from idolatry by certain Jesuits, and that he was obliged to fly from the vengeance of the Japanese, whose hatred has been described as particularly virulent against Christianity in all its forms.

The singularity of his relation, and the apparent simplicity, of his manners, induced the colonel, and Innes, his regimental chaplain, an unprincipled profligate, to take him under their protection ; he accompanied them to England, and was soon after introduced to the Bishop of London, who listened to his account with pity and implicit faith, became his patron, contributed generously towards his support, and rewarded with considerable preferment, Innes, who was aware of, and had early detected the cheat, but considered it as a convenient step to patronage.

The artful conduct of the stranger, in producing and speaking, a language, alphabet, and grammar, purely of his own invention, and his eating raw meat, roots, and herbs, soon rendered him an object of publick notice, and occasioned much curious disquisition between many characters of the first rank in church and state.



The keen eyed scepticism of the Doctors Halley, Mead, and Woodward, rescued them, however, from the charge of blind credulity, in which many of their respectable cotemporaries were involved ; these gentlemen had cried down Psalmanazar as an ar-rant rogue, from the beginning. Yet, what pretence, however vain, what absurdity, however palpable, need shrink from enquiry, or dread detection, when Dr. Graham, Mayersbach, Animal Magnetism, and Metallick Tractors, meet with zealous disciples, and warm encouragement ?

The most sanguine hopes of the impostor, could he have silenced the accusation of his own heart, appear to have been crowned with success, and he derived liberal contributions from the pity, the curiosity, or the folly of mankind, who considered it as their duty, as Christians and as humane men, to protect an unfortunate fugitive, who had suffered in the cause of truth.

He drew up in Latin, an account of the island of Formosa, a consistent and entertaining work, which was translated, hurried through the press, had a rapid sale, and is quoted, without suspicion, by Buffon ; whilst his adherence to certain singularities in his manners and diet, gathered from popular opinion, or from books, considerably strengthened the imposition, for the carrying on of which he was eminently qualified, by possessing a command of countenance, temper, and recollection, which no perplexity, rough usage, or cross examination, could derange.

His memory was at the same time so correctly tenacious, that after the exercise of habit, in verbal arrangement, on being desired to translate a long list of English words into the Formosan language, they were marked down without his knowledge, corroborated by his correctly affixing the same terms to the same words, on the question being repeated, three, six, or even twelve months afterwards. In this manner his imposture had been first discovered by Innes, but this disgrace to his cloth suppressed what he knew, and joined in the fraud from sinister motives.

By favour of the Bishop of Oxford, who proved a warm advocate in his cause, Psalmanazar was enabled to improve himself in his studies, and convenient apartments were provided for him in one of the universities.

To impress his new neighbours at this place with proper ideas of his intense and unceasing application, it was his custom to keep

lighted candles in his room during the night, and to sleep in an easy chair ; that his bed-maker, finding his bed untumbled (and not failing to repeat the circumstance) might not suppose he indulged in so unphilosophical a refreshment, as going to bed : he occasionally lamented the noise and interruptions occasioned by certain young men in an adjoining apartment, who preferred the joys of wine and good-fellowship, to solitude and midnight studies.

On his return to London, he drew up, at the desire of his friends, a Version of the Church Catechism, in what he called his native tongue, which was examined by the learned, found regular and grammatical, and pronounced a real language, and no counterfeit. By these, and other arts, the supplies of his patrons continued liberal, and he was enabled to lead an idle, in some instances, when he was thrown off his guard, an extravagant, and it is to be feared, occasionally an immoral life.

Those gentlemen who first suspected his integrity could not rest till their doubts were justified ; they pointed out various absurdities, and many contradictions, in his narrative, as well as in his declarations ; his first encouragers began to feel shame, he was gradually lowered in the publick esteem, his early benefactors silently withdrew their support.

The fraud was generally understood, and the capricious *cullibility* of the publick, which is so eager to swallow barefaced improbability, was soon converted by a natural process, into the malignity of irritated pride, and the resentment of mortified vanity ; while those who had originally given warning against imposture, did not forget to increase the confusion of their opponents, by ridicule and sarcasm.

The situation of this degraded man became critical ; detected, and almost deserted, his subsistence was precarious, but having displayed in his assumed character, considerable abilities, and having cultivated an extensive acquaintance with a class of men, who have been pronounced the best patrons of literary adventure, he was employed by the booksellers in a periodical publication, and lastly in the accurate and useful, but dry and laborious undertaking of a Universal History, a considerable portion of the ancient part of which, was committed to his care.

He did not, during his life, in any formal manner, proclaim his imposition, and could never be prevailed on, to disclose his real

name and country (supposed to be the south of France) that he might not disgrace his family ; yet he did not scruple confessing his fraud to confidential friends, with tears and repentance.

---

### RIGHTS OF THE PLAYERS.

It is a matter of regret to a mind susceptible of feeling for the embarrassments of others, that those who spend their lives in the profession of an actor, and who, though holding inferiour ranks in that profession, yet endeavour to "act well their parts," should ever be the subjects of sneers and hisses from those who have perhaps less moral goodness, and less ability to perform their parts in real life, than themselves. What right has he whose whole knowledge lies in the rule of three, and whose imagination in its most daring flights never soared above the shelf which contains the ledger and waste book, to insult and put to confusion the player who would personate the faithful steward ? By what authority does he who received his education in the market where he sold cabbages and potatoes, sneer at him who endeavours to portray an honest gardener ? What right has he, that clothed and fed himself by carrying newspapers, to condemn the efforts of the letter carrier at the theatre ? How can he, who is superiour in no faculty but that of speech to the horses in his stable, laugh at the postillion on the stage, and "set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too ?" With what face can he, that wields the sledge of a blacksmith, and whose appearance denotes that he belongs to "Vulcan's stithy," embarrass and confound with rude speech and hisses those, without whom *Richard* could not be king nor *Alexander* conqueror ?

These reflections were suggested by observing more than once since the theatre has been open, attempts to interrupt some of the performers by loud talking, laughing, and hissing, "though some necessary question of the play were then to be considered." That's villainous ; and shows a pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it." It ought to be remembered that COOPER was once a mere letter carrier ; and that some of the most eminent actors of the present day both here and in England, were once in the lowest and most menial offices of the theatre.

W. W.

## THEATRICAL RECORDER.

## No. VII.

Nov. 29. *George Barnwell* and *The Forty Thieves*.

There is scarcely a piece to be found in the catalogue of English plays, that is not more *tolerable with indifferent acting*, than the tragedy of *George Barnwell*. It is not sufficient that the representatives of *Barnwell*, *Trueman*, and *Maria* possess youth and beauty, qualifications indispensibly necessary ; they must also have the power to make the spectator feel an interest in their friendship and their love. It is insufferably tedious to hear *Barnwell* talking about the “ agonies of remorse,” the “ fever of the soul, and the madness of desire ;” those “ undistinguished horrors” that

“ Make his brain,  
Like hell, the seat of darkness and of pain,”

unless he can “ force his soul so to his own conceit,” as to make us feel his horrors and sympathise in his agonies. It is not perhaps too much to say, that there is no play in our language better calculated to awaken the tender and virtuous sensibilities of our nature, none so perfectly unexceptionable in its moral tendency, none more capable of producing strong and happy effect, when well represented ; nor one that so often produces disgust and aversion in the hands of inferior actors.

Within ten years Messrs. Jones, Cromwell, Downie, Coles, Whitlock, Fox, and Poe, have successively, been the *Barnwell* of our theatre ; and Mr. Duff will not take it as a compliment, for it is none, if we say that his is superior to them all. His appearance was interesting, and many parts of his performance had great merit. His first interview with *Millwood* and the last scene were the best ; perhaps because less passion is necessary in those scenes. A general fault was too much hurry, and consequently too little time for reflection in the soliloquies. That part which begins the second act was spoken to the audience rather than to himself ; and that immediately previous to the murder of his *Uncle*, which is scarcely inferior to some of the soliloquies of *Macbeth*, was so rapidly uttered as not to admit of expressing any passion with discrimination.—Were not Mr. Duff an actor of great promise, it would be waste of time to make these remarks ; we know that it is in his power to play *Barnwell* much better ; and as “ one



good turn deserves another," it is hoped that he will not take offence at what is kindly meant, but give us on Christmas eve, a *new edition with corrections and improvements.*

Mr. Drake in *Thoroughgood* was respectable.

Our taste probably differs from the greater part of the spectators ; but there was something in the acting of Mrs. Doige, in the fifth act, that was interesting. Mrs. Mills looked very well in *Millwood* ; but (hang this *but*, as Sir George Touchwood might say "I hate a sentence that begins with so unpromising a word") she made no distinction between a feigned and real passion ; and in expressing her "thoughts of love," appeared as anxious to deceive the audience as *Barnwell*. In this respect she was inferior to Mrs. Barnes in *Lucy*.

In the *Forty thieves* Mr. Entwistle appeared for the first time in *Ali Baba*. It is impossible to speak of his performance without comparing it with that of Mr. Bernard in the same character ; and fortunately for him, and the managers too, the result of the comparison is greatly in his favour. We wish as much could be said of some of the other parts which have new representatives ; but alas ! what can be said of Mrs. Duff's *Morgiana* and Mr. Stockwell's *Ganem*, but that "we have a brain that nourishes our nerves," and the "remembrance of days foregone," gives us more pleasure than the possession of those we now behold. The greater part of the choruses were omitted ; those retained were most lamely executed. Mrs. Mills's voice is not unpleasant, if she would contrive to get it in *unison* with Mr. Hewitt's violin, instead of running parallel to it at the distance of a *semitone* above. Her singing is also rendered harsh and discordant to musical ears, by the sudden drawing in of her breath ; which produces a noise that continually reminds one of the heaving of a bellows. Mrs. Mills however is a favourite with the audience, and justly so ; for in addition to her genteel figure and pretty appearance on the stage, (qualities, which, in the present *hard times*, are valuable on account of their scarcity) she discovers much good taste in many things, and a laudable desire to please in every thing she undertakes.

We cannot close this article without paying a compliment to Mr. Hewitt on his judicious and pleasing arrangements in the orchestra ; we have heard but one opinion on this subject, and that is, that his selection of well known and favourite pieces for interludes,

in preference to the 'sinfonia' and 'sonata,' and his taste in modulating from "gay to grave," and from grave to gay; is highly deserving of approbation.

Dec. 2. *The Exile* and *The Three and Deuce*.

As it is given out that the *Exile* is to be *exiled* for several weeks, it is hoped the managers will improve its appearance when it returns from banishment. We refer principally to the procession and ceremony of coronation, which lack numbers, and are also deficient in show. The dresses are too cheap, for a people as fond of finery as the Russians. The play must be made *attractive*, before it can be *profitable*.

Mr. Duff in *The Three and Deuce* is entitled to much praise, for his discriminating performance of the three *Singles*, a *wise man*, a *fop*, and a *fool*. It is in *Percival*, however, that he produces the strongest effect. Though the other two, as *Macfoggin* says, "ran away with all the wit," they left him the power of exciting the most laughter.

Dec. 4. *Such things are* and *The Shipwreck*.

The profits of this evening were appropriated for the benefit of the widow and children of the late R. T. PAINE, jnn. Esq. and were very considerable. The only way in which Bostonians can now show their respect to the memory of their favourite poet, is by acts of munificence to his unfortunate widow, and helpless offspring; and on this occasion we are happy to say the theatre was handsomely filled.

The performance of the play was such as to give general satisfaction. If any one of the performers merits a particular notice more than another, it is Mr. Drake, for his distinguished excellence in *Haswell*.

---

FOR THE COMET.

R. T. PAINE, JUN.

It must have been extremely gratifying to every feeling heart, to observe the liberality with which the benefit of Mrs. Paine and her children was attended on Wednesday evening last. The receipts will no doubt amply relieve the present exigencies of that amiable woman, and in some degree assist her in the education of

her children. Every lover of native genius, every admirer of genuine poesy will sincerely lament the early cloud which has forever shrouded the literary abilities of the departed. His lyre is unstrung, his tuneful voice is mute. No more the flashes of wit, the poetick effusion, the colloquial powers of Paine, will enliven the social circle ; he sleeps in his narrow house, and seldom will one be found to strike the lyre with so bold a hand or draw from it such mellifluous strains. His life was short and unmarked by any extraordinary vicissitudes, and perhaps it will be accepted, if, altering a few lines from the celebrated Elegy of Gray, the following is inscribed to his memory.

Now rests within the bosom of the earth,  
 One who to fortune was, nor fame unknown ;  
 Genius exulted at his hour of birth,  
 The tuneful *sisters* claim'd him as their own.

Around his brows the fairest wreaths they twin'd,  
 His pen was snatch'd from fam'd Pegasus' wing :  
 Science illumin'd his capacious mind,  
 Apollo's self instructed him to sing.

His genius, like the meteor's dazzling light,  
 Sent forth bright flashes of ethereal fire :  
 Broke radiant on the pleas'd, astonish'd sight ;  
 Shot to amaze, and blaz'd but to expire.

Here pause, and let th' oblivious mantle fall,  
 Here give humanity's full tide its way ;  
 Declare his talents were esteem'd by all,  
 And close the eulogium in the words of Gray.

" No farther seek his merits to disclose,  
 Nor drag his frailties from their dread abode ;  
 There they alike in trembling hope repose,  
 The bosom of his Father, and his God."

---

### DEATH.

BY LORD LANSDOWNE.

#### I.

Enough, enough, my soul, of worldly noise,  
 Of airy pomps, and fleeting joys,  
 What does this busy world provide at best,  
 But brittle goods that break like glass,

But poison'd sweets, a troubled feast,  
 And pleasures like the winds that in a moment pass ?  
 Thy thoughts to nobler meditations give,  
 And study how to die, not how to live.

## II.

How frail is beauty ! Ah ! how vain  
 And how short liv'd those glories are,  
 That vex our days and nights with pain,  
 And break our hearts with care !  
 In dust we no distinction see,  
 Such Helen is, such, Myra, thou must be.

## III.

How short is life ! Why will vain courtiers toil  
 And crowd a vainer monarch for a smile ?  
 What is that monarch but a mortal man,  
 His crown a pageant, and his life a span ?  
 With all his guards, and his dominions, he  
 Must sicken too, and die as well as we.

## IV.

Those boasted names of conquerors and kings  
 Are swallow'd, and become forgotten things :  
 One destin'd period men in common have,  
 The great, the vile, the coward, and the brave,  
 Are food alike for worms, companions in the grave.  
 The prince and parasite together lie,  
 No fortune can exalt, but death will climb as high.

---

A note, dated "November 6," signed "B. LANDSLEY," has been received. It is nearly unintelligible to us, and would be utterly so to the publick; otherwise we should have published it, presuming that was the intention of the writer. Mr. L. says, "I called to castigate you yesterday, as your insignificance deserved—but trembling you shrunk from an interview." This shows that he is in a terrible passion; but for what cause he has not deigned to inform us; and, we declare, that as truly as we now pen these lines, the first intimation we received of his having called was contained in the note he has sent us. Every person employed in the office of our printer and bookstore of our publisher declares unequivocally that Mr. L. did not call for the editor, his assertion to the contrary notwithstanding. If Mr. L. has been injured or "insulted" in our paper, we will cheerfully publish his defence, provided he gets the better of his propensity to blackguardism, and writes in decent terms.

"LEANDER" came too late for this paper—his communication shall be attended to next week.